MARCA-RELLI

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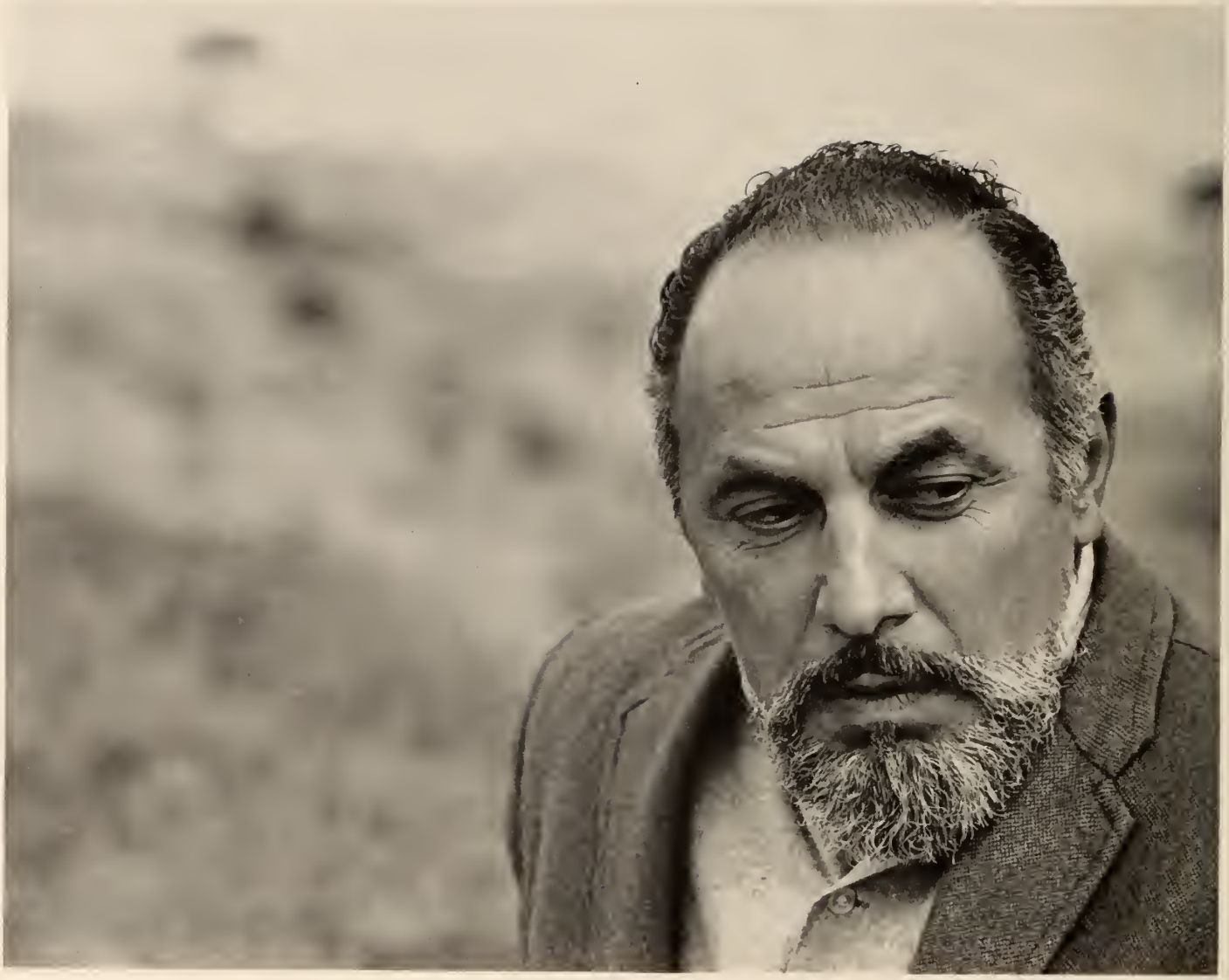

marca-relli

by William C. Agee

Associate Curator, Whitney Museum of American Art

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, NEW YORK

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12 x 11¼. Collection of the artist.

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Conrad Marca-Relli's achievement has been to raise collage to a scale and complexity equal to that of monumental painting. Since its inception in 1912 by Picasso and Braque, collage has undergone many formal transformations, yet it has remained a corollary to painting. Even a master collagist, Jean Arp, could refer to collage as a "less-refined" medium. Beginning in 1953, Marca-Relli accepted the potential risks inherent in collage and developed it as a complete pictorial system essentially without precedent in modern art. He has used it neither as a single element of structural reordering of reality as in cubist collage, nor as ambiguous fragments evoking exterior associations as did the Surrealists. Rather, Marca-Relli has extended collage to the point where it now carries its own full and distinct range of formal and emotive means.

In pursuing this course, Marca-Relli has bridged and maintained an uncommon duality of putatively conflicting factors. He has, for instance, virtually abolished the traditional distinction between "representational" and "abstract" by consistently drawing on the figure as a source of abstract images. He has been identified with the second generation of abstract expressionists, yet while employing the directness and boldness of the New York School, he has equally espoused traditional values of European painting—polish, elegance and finish—which have been almost universally rejected by other members of his generation. By heritage and temperament Marca-Relli has strong roots in Europe, and at a time when American art has aggressively detached itself from the Continent, he has continued to travel and work there. "I like to travel and I like to visit places that affect me . . . I've been told that it was wrong. . . . It's as if you have to do it just here and [must] shut your eyes to other things. I don't believe in shutting my eyes to anything. . . Art is art anywhere."[1]

Marca-Relli is an inveterate and restless traveler. He was born on June 5, 1913 in Boston, and made the first of many extended trips to Europe as a young child with his father, a news commentator and journalist. He began to draw at an early age, was encouraged and given his first lessons in Italy. On these visits abroad Marca-Relli was imbued with a deep feeling for the heritage of Italian culture and the pace

and texture of European life, a feeling he has always retained. Eventually the family settled in New York where Marca-Relli finished his last year of high school at night in order to devote more time to painting. There followed a year of study at Cooper Union after which he enrolled in various small art classes, absorbing the fundamentals of a solid craftsmanship. By this time, in the early 1930's, the Depression had made it increasingly difficult for artists to support themselves. Marca-Relli had by then established his own studio and managed to live by doing occasional drawings and covers for newspapers and magazines, and by a teaching job.

The advent of the WPA art projects in 1935 was, as for so many artists, vitally important to Marca-Relli. From 1935 through 1938 he was employed first as a teacher and then on both the easel and mural divisions of the Federal Art Project. For the first time he was able to support himself while giving his full time and energy to his art. Perhaps more important, however, was that the sense of community developed among artists on the WPA. Marca-Relli came into contact with a new group of acquaintances who were to help in significantly altering his entire view of painting. His supervisor on the mural project was Rollin Crampton; by 1938 among his friends were Peter Agostini, Willem de Kooning, Franz Kline, George Spaventa, John Graham and others. Through discussions and visits to galleries and museums with these artists, Marca-Relli began to absorb the tenets of modernism as revealed in the work of Picasso, Matisse and Miro, as well as Orozco by whom he was briefly influenced in the late 1930's. His break from the prevailing figurative style of the period, however, was halted by his induction into the Army early in 1941. Although he was represented in his first group exhibition, the Soldier-Artists show held that year at the Contemporary Arts Gallery (by a painting entitled *Reveille*), Marca-Relli was unable to work until the war had ended.

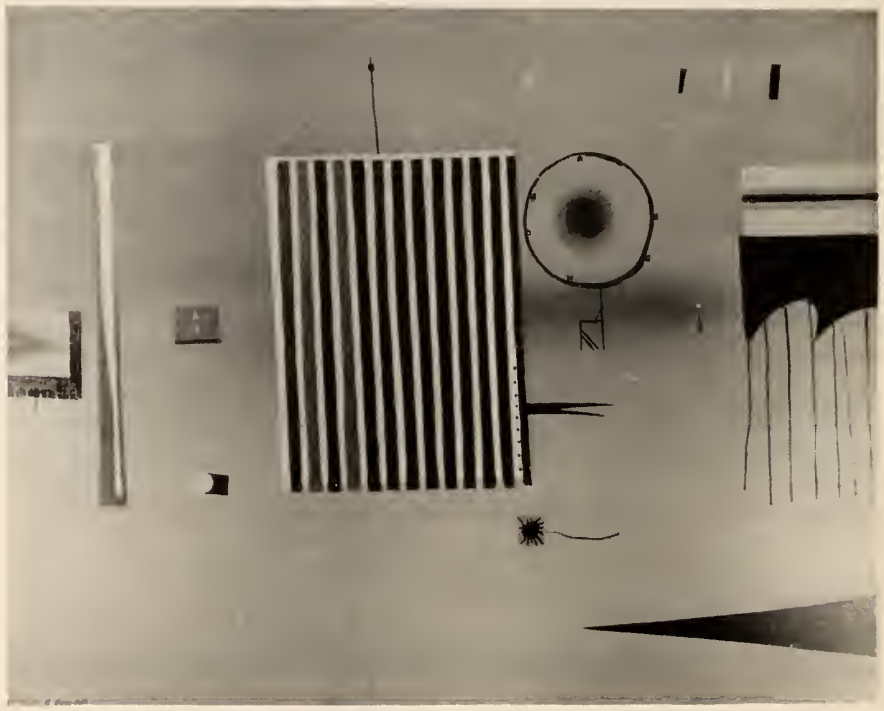
After spending a year in Woodstock, he returned to New York in 1946 and resumed painting. Significantly, however, it was in Rome and Paris, where he returned in 1947, that Marca-Relli found the atmosphere in which his first important works were done. These paintings were shown at his first one-man exhibition at the Niveau Gallery in New York in 1947. They were based on circus themes and

motifs of Italian Renaissance architecture, and were dominated by expansive dream spaces and elusive surrealist associations of memory. In both the mood and the flat, cutout shapes set into distant perspectives, these paintings were reminiscent of Giorgio de Chirico and Henri Rousseau, artists whom Marca-Relli admired at this time. On the occasion of the exhibition, he remarked, "The lonely street of our childhood, the whistle of the train in the still night, an old circus poster—these are my seeds."[2] These themes were continued until 1949 and were the basis of his second exhibition held that year at the Niveau Gallery. Marca-Relli then began to experiment with another major surrealist vein, a controlled and more formal variation of automatic writing embodied in a series of semi-abstract paintings consisting of protoplasmic and other invented shapes stemming from the unconscious. He extended this direction in 1950-51 with a group of large and totally abstract works shown at the New Gallery in 1951. They were brilliantly colored and animated by a fluid line and biomorphic forms which showed the deep impression Miro and Gorky had made on him. The paintings were successful, but Marca-Relli was displeased with them, feeling that they were not his true direction. In 1951 he traveled again to Rome to question and revaluate the premises of his art.

That year Marca-Relli became absorbed in the texture, solidity and inherent formal order of the architecture of ancient and Renaissance Rome. After returning to New York, he exhibited his new work at the Stable Gallery in 1952. The paintings depicted city squares, ports and buildings, themes which presented a formal context for a rectilinear structure of horizontal and vertical elements. A lingering surrealist mood was evident in the empty and hallucinatory spaces bathed in an eerie light as if glimpsed through a nostalgia for places remembered. Perspectives were sometimes reversed and the effects of weight and gravity accordingly rearranged by darkening skies and treating foreground areas and buildings as volumes of light. The closed, two-dimensional reality of the canvas was emphasized by patterned and interlocking forms brushed in low-keyed, mat blacks, whites, grays, umbers and ochres. Marca-Relli's art, indeed, has proceeded through a logical progression of formal problems suggested by prior investigations. Thus in the paintings

of 1952 one can readily perceive a striving for the essence of the physical substance of textures which suggests the literalness and placement of collage forms.

Marca-Relli's art has, moreover, always followed a pattern of moving toward a greater reduction and economy of means. As he increasingly emphasized a taut pictorial structure, he found a kinship with the work of another modern Italian master, Giorgio Morandi, who had realized a vision of harmony and order through very simple but perfect still-life forms. In 1953 Marca-Relli began *Still Life* (p. 18) which, in the path of Morandi, consisted of sparse but full forms suggesting an architectural order. The painting was virtually complete when the artist traveled to Mexico that summer. There he was deeply impressed by the tactile qualities of the brilliantly sunlit surfaces of adobe buildings. This experience led him to renew and intensify his search for the plastic equivalents of the textures and volumes of architecture which had been evident in his painting of 1952. While working that summer Marca-Relli ran out of paint, and as a simple expedient, yet with a logic dictated by the course of his work, he began to experiment with collage. He imme-



Composition. 1949.
Oil on canvas. 24 x 30.
Collection of Dr. and Mrs. Benjamin Kresberg,
Miami Beach, Florida.

diately found that it provided the literal and material density he sought. When he returned from Mexico in the fall, he reworked *Still Life*, attaching strips of plain canvas directly to the table and the oblong form resting on it. He also revised *Seated Figure, Outdoors* (p. 22) a painting which had been partially finished before his trip to Mexico. The heavy impasto of this painting indicates his search for the felt qualities of surfaces and textures which collage could resolve simply and directly. By substituting a few areas of canvas it was no longer necessary to build up paint surfaces, which in fact threatened to obscure the underlying order to achieve a structural clarity and firmness.

During the preceding years, Marca-Relli had done, in addition to the architectural themes, a group of figurative works, some of which had been exhibited at the Stable Gallery in 1952. These paintings were the source of his almost exclusive concentration on the figure in the years to follow, a source to which he has constantly returned ever since. In the period from late 1953 through 1955, beginning with *Sleeping Figure* (p. 26) of 1953-54, he developed and applied collage as a full pictorial method to a series of single figures. Marca-Relli had moved to East Hampton in 1953 and came in close contact with Willem de Kooning and Jackson Pollock. The figures perhaps owe something to de Kooning's *Woman I* of 1950-51 in which de Kooning pasted together and then tore apart and recomposed collage segments of the anatomy. However, in their adumbrated and faceless anonymity Marca-Relli's mannikins are closer in spirit to de Chirico. In these collages, the artist sought what he termed the "architecture of the human figure".[3] He has never worked from the model, preferring to rely on a conceptual process to select and admit only those elements most essential to the creation of the total image.

In seeking the architecture of a single figure, Marca-Relli established the working method which, although later refined, elaborated and sometimes varied, remained as the basis of his art. He started with a rather quickly drawn and rough sketch on the bare canvas to indicate his point of departure, although he did not necessarily hold himself to its confines. He then cut out with a razor blade segments of either raw or primed but unpainted canvas, and later natural or painted

linens, which were pinned to the supporting canvas after they had been coated with a mixture of black paint and glue. After they were placed on their foundation, the collage sections were often shifted and rearranged as other segments added in proximity altered the formal relationships within the composition. This method of spontaneous attack with the formal elements in constant flux until the final piece had been secured, allied Marca-Relli with the abstract expressionists. His willingness to accept pictorial accident while controlling it, and to reveal the working process was also in keeping with the tenets of action painting. The process of revising the placement of collage segments frequently meant that several layers of canvas—as many as twenty in one case—were added until he found the desired clarity of the figure. By 1955 Marca-Relli began to add paint to a few of the canvas strips after they had been secured, but limited himself to a subdued cubist palette of ochres, off-whites and grays. Thus collage became a painting with oil and canvas. Another element emerged when the adhesive mixture of glue and paint oozed out and created black outlines which functioned as silhouettes, modifying the relaitonship between adjoining shapes.

In the collages of 1954-55, such as *Seated Figure* (p. 27) and *Oracle* (p. 15) the figure is flattened against the picture plane in a frontal and hieratic pose. From this position it seems either to move forward or to recede into a shallow and limited background. The use of either alternative to lock the figure in space, creates what we termed a "duality of negative and positive space," and constitutes a major formal problem in his work at this time. In turn, the interchange of the figure with an indeterminate space creates other opposing forces. Light and dark areas are reversed at points and voids replace implied solids in a cubist inversion of known, objective reality. Each segment of these collage cuts and determines its own place and is relatively large, open, clear and independent, while retaining its place in the whole. Each is imbued with its own kind of geography through the variation of texture, line and silhouette as well as shading of colors. In the works of 1955 such as *Tenant* (p. 28) the component segments began to shift and overlap as Marca-Relli's control of the medium was extended and refined. Their easy movement and sliding within the figure's structure left the ap-

opposite:
Oracle. 1955.
Oil and canvas collage. 79 x 49.
Lent by Mrs. Eleanor Ward.

pearance of an afterimage not quite in focus, which in turn suggested Marcel Duchamp's studies of sequential motion in the *Nude Descending the Staircase* of 1912.

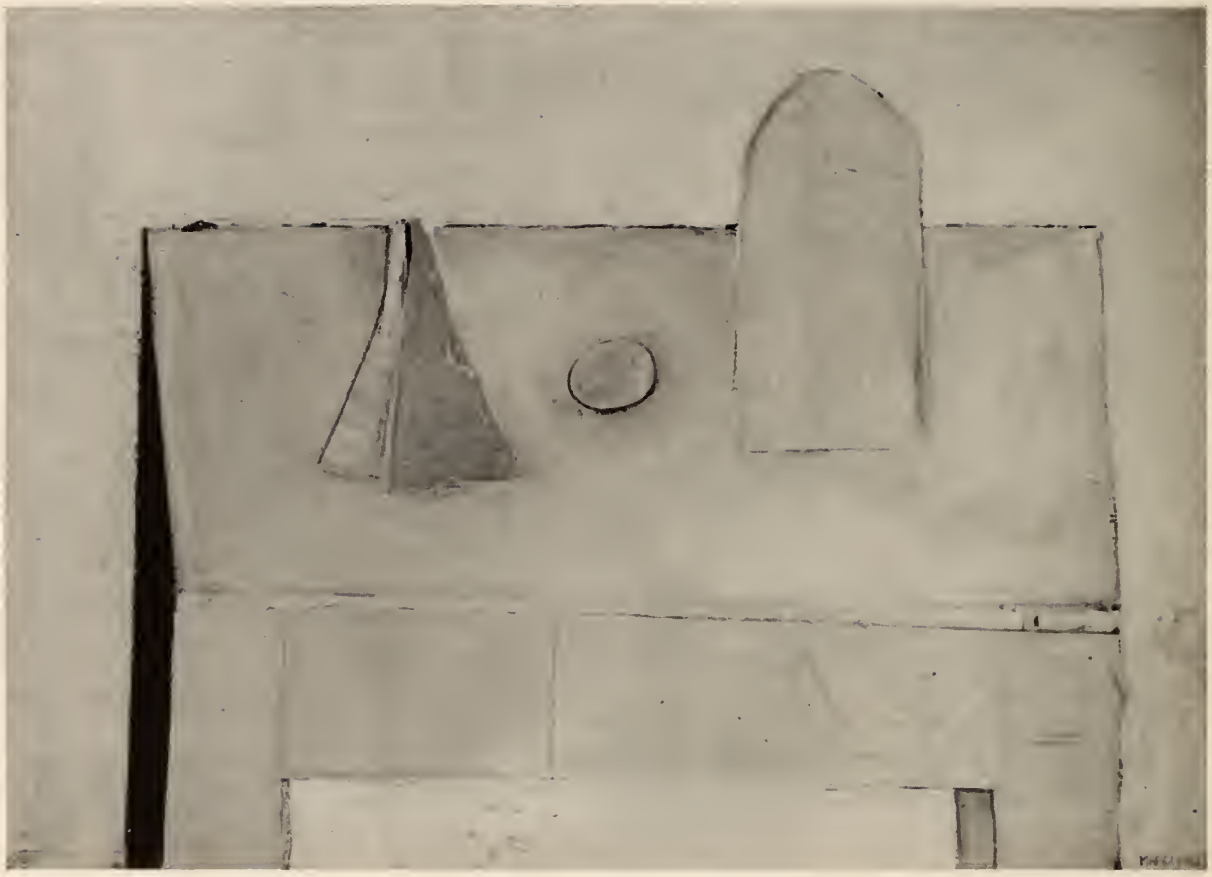
In a series of works initiated by *The Struggle* (p. 29) of late 1955, Marca-Relli undertook to further extend the expressive range of collage by increasing its complexity and adding to its means. Here, and in other collages, he introduced two figures and sought to establish their architecture. Their relation to the surrounding space became accordingly more intricate and tenuous. Figures broke away from their frontal, seated positions and were depicted in more contorted, active stances which moved diagonally across or down through the canvas. The single figure was by no means abandoned, however, although it too underwent an extensive formal revision as in *The Warrior* (p. 30). In each case, collage forms became more fragmented and were loosened from the firm and relatively stable vertical and horizontal underpinnings of the earlier collages. A greater differentiation between line, texture and shape appeared, and more contrasts between painted and unpainted surfaces were also evident. The forms assumed a new biomorphism, in contrast to the earlier and simpler shapes; the paint surface became more active and began to pull away from the confines of linear contours. As opposed to the static quietness of the first collages, these works took on a trembling and convulsed motion. The internal movement and new complexity of spatial positioning of these figures was significantly increased by two formal devices used for the first time in *Seated Figure* of 1956. Marca-Relli here experimented with singeing the edges of the canvas strips with a torch to add a fluidity which broke and softened the rigidity of the straight line. In securing the collage segments, he had accidentally spotted the forms with dots of glue, but these had surprisingly incorporated themselves into the overall composition. He thus began to employ them deliberately to simulate rivet holes or tack marks. These dots created another element which moved independently over the surface while at the same time binding together the layers of the actual collage.

With his command of collage at a new point of mastery, Marca-Relli began work in 1956 on two large figure compositions, *Trial* (p. 32) and *Battle* (p. 33). In

these works, he introduced myriad figures in a state of action and movement throughout the composition. They represent what the artist now called "the architecture of an event,"[5] and introduce a multiplicity and complexity unparalleled in his entire career. They combine an extraordinary variety of shapes, textures and contrasts merged in infinite overlappings and intersections which spread across the surface in a series of seemingly unending configurations. The collages done immediately prior to *Trial* and *Battle* had begun to obliterate recognizable sections of the anatomy, and in these two works virtually all identifiable human references disappeared. The literalness of collage structure became paramount, removing all allusive elements of painting and asserting instead the material hardness of shape, line, shadow and depth. The proliferating forms, while locked together, assumed more biomorphic qualities and were less confined to a precise outline. The artist resumed his dialogue with Italian art in *Battle,* which was directly inspired by Paolo Uccello's *Battle of San Romano.* Marca-Relli's *Battle* adapted the formal placement of objects in a stilted perspective which was the basis of Uccello's monumental painting. Each segment, like a sword or banner in the Uccello mural, is given its own identity and role in the total compositional scheme. As in the Uccello painting, movement is constant, playing across the accents generated by multiple points of focus.

The next year Marca-Relli returned to a use of the single figure. As in *The Dweller* (p. 34) the human image now became almost completely submerged behind a veil of shredded canvas strips animated by rapid oscillations. In merging with the increasing fragmentation and shattering of these forms, the paint surface was set in motion and worked independently of line and contour to create rippling effects throughout the collage. Marca-Relli took more advantage of accidents incurred in the rapid glueing and painting process, with the result that no one segment existed as a clearly read plane but was merged as part of inseparable junctions.

The density and concentrated energy of these collages were retained in the work of 1958, but were focused to a greater degree within a more constricted area. Figurative references were the basis of *Odalisque* (p. 35) and *Surge* (p. 36), for ex-



Still Life. 1952-53.
Oil and canvas collage. 40 x 50.
Lent by the artist.

ample, although they were now completely abstracted. The morphology of the human anatomy was hidden behind a deliberate ambiguity and could be perceived with equal justice as parts of landscape passages. The forces of events and figures in motion became Marca-Relli's concern in these collages, and although the forms were larger, more open and distinct, their convolutions were intensified. The focus on compacted sections seemed to force these shapes into a vortex at the center of the canvas. Working on a structural frame which owed something to de Kooning's painting of the late 1940's, Marca-Relli introduced volumes of color as a new formal problem. He abandoned his former subdued range of off-whites and ochres and began applying brilliant reds, blues, and yellows. These hues were sometimes applied as colored linens, but were most frequently painted directly on the canvas surface. A new richness and variation of texture and contrast marked the collages of that year.

After spending a few months during the summer of 1958 in the south of France, Marca-Relli continued to probe the movement of synthesized forces. But his work now embodied the sharp contrasts and greater translucence of Mediterranean light with the result of loosening and opening the compacted density of collage

Cityscape. 1952.
Oil on canvas. 26 x 38.
Lent by the artist.

forms. In works such as *Junction* (p. 41) color became thinner and more diffused. Areas of paint were applied independently of contours with the result of simultaneously creating a painting and collage which were merged as separate and distinct entities. As forms broke loose from the earlier density, Marca-Relli opposed the solid reality of collage segments against the illusionism of brushed areas of paint. The spatial atmosphere became more shifting and indeterminate. Shapes within this space were now more linear, clearer and more legible as individual planes. The openness of these works was emphasized by Marca-Relli's reduction of the number of colors to concentrate on the contrast between one dominant hue with strong blacks and whites.

The decreased surface agitation in the work of 1958 pointed to the order and formalism which dominated the collages of the next year. After three years of rapid, even violent movement of forms, Marca-Relli's instinctive urge to a classic stability and harmony reasserted itself in the pattern which has marked the course of his art. In a series of works titled simply by the day on which they were finished, Marca-Relli introduced rectangular shapes which tended to repeat themselves in regular clusters and patterns. These forms were soft and were pervaded by an easy calm as they floated across a single monochromatic field. The infinite breaks and intersections of the earlier collages, as well as the built up layers of canvas and scruffy surfaces and textures, were discarded. In their stead, a simple post-and-lintel arrangement predominated. These collages, although their internal activity was considerably slowed down, were not static; forms within forms were created by spraying black areas within the rectangular shapes which gently shift position and keep the composition from settling into a single given order.

The clarity of structure within these works began to dissolve in 1961, partially through Marca-Relli's renewed investigation of the complexities of the human figure. The duality between figurative and abstract elements at the heart of his work again appeared at this time. In *The Sentinel* (p. 47) for instance, forms based on the figure reintroduced a new biomorphism of interconnecting, irregular shapes which fill the surface with an overall, uniform intensity, marking a new departure for the artist. The regeneration of pictorial complexity found in these configurations of

the anatomy were translated into a series of purely abstract collages beginning with *The Passage* (p. 45), which can be counted among his finest works. In collages such as *Blackboard* (p. 48) and *Monk Brown* (p. 50), Marca-Relli employed an ambiguity between landscape, figurative and architectural references. Allusions to varieties of perceived experience abound and multiply, moving centrifugally across the surface in expanding and interlooping sections. These shapes were cut quickly and intuitively and combine a sure balance between control and spontaneity. In 1962 Marca-Relli remarked that his method was based ". . . not on speed for its own sake but to create through free, automatic action, before conscious thought can censor out creativeness."[6] These works show a new austerity of color and were limited to gradations of one predominant, resonant hue. The color was sprayed, a method which produced subtle variations of surface density and softened the underlying brittleness and hardness of these forms with a floating, atmospheric luminosity. The effect of contrasts between surface painting and interior collage elements was further modified by the tracing of simulated rivet holes and white lines which divide and re-form additional areas and planes.

The evident hardness in the collages of 1961 forecast a renewed urge to discover again the very substance and tangibility of materials, the impulse which had originally led him to collage many years earlier. Canvas had become almost too pliable, and Marca-Relli now searched for materials which would offer a greater resiliency to the hand. In 1961 he used thin sheets of metal in several small collages (p. 50), but metal at that time proved too awkward and inflexible. The next year he discovered in sheets of vinyl plastic the right combination of resistance and flexibility. Works of 1962, such as *Plan B* (p. 51), use vinyl sheets nailed directly to a wooden support. Following his innate tendency to formal reduction and simplicity, the shapes gradually cast off traces of biomorphism and became progressively fewer in number, larger and more open. *Cristobal* (p. 52) and other later works in this series assumed a planar arrangement of horizontal and vertical shapes somewhat reminiscent of the 1959 collages. Volumes of color were added as contrasts to the more neutral and open areas of the natural shades of vinyl. These color volumes also provided a weight which nudges against and displaces

other shapes, creating a slow internal rhythm. That rhythm is irregular and off-beat, caused in part by a deliberate awkwardness in cutting and attaching the plastic.

Marca-Relli extended his use of industrial materials in a group of aluminum collages executed in 1963. The even harder, but more graceful medium of aluminum continued to express the literal, tangible qualities of collage, although it carried these works at the same time to a position somewhere between painting and sculpture. The tendency to an economy of means was intensified; these collages rely on a few essential forms cut with clean and precise edges. References to wings, fuselages and tail sections of airplanes are revealed in titles such as *Runway #3* (p. 54) and *Lockheed 200* (p. 55) as well as in the riveted and polished machine surfaces. Marca-Relli has said, "In painting . . . I feel that when I bring it down to very simple shapes . . . the ambiguous is created." [7] As the aluminum forms move in long, sweeping lines from the edge of the support, or enclose them-

Seated Figure Outdoors. 1953.
Oil and canvas collage. 20 x 15.
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Walter Bareiss.

selves in self-contained shapes, broken only by oblong slivers of color, we are given a subtle pictorial vitality which indeed belies the apparent—and deceptive—simplicity of form.

After the completion of the aluminum collages, Marca-Relli's art followed much the same course as cubist collage of 1912-1914. Once the flatness and material reality of the surface had been fully established by a metal skin which prevented spatial recession, the collage could only project itself forward. In 1964, Marca-Relli extended collage into actual, three-dimensional space by means of shallow reliefs which logically had been the direction of collage from its first use in 1912 to Picasso's relief constructions of 1913-14. Marca-Relli's reliefs brought his work to an absolute clarity of minimal parts disturbed only by interior glimpses of mechanical springs which seem to first hold and bind the relief, then imply possibilities of moving, closing or rotating. From this point, Marca-Relli took collage to its ultimate step with a series of free-standing sculptures done in 1966, removing all vestiges of illusionism and transforming collage into a real and physical object. Like the reliefs, the aluminum sections of the sculptures were shaped directly by hand, leaving the unmistakable imprint of the human touch, altering and transforming the materials of the machine.

In 1966, after exploring the possibilities of plastics and aluminum, Marca-Relli returned to paint and canvas as the materials of his collages. Forms in these works were further condensed and colors underwent a parallel modification. Basic contours of the aluminum reliefs were suggested in some cases, as for example, in the rectangular frame within *Untitled* (p. 64). In this and other collages, whether the shapes were square or oval, forms were open at the center, and were placed directly against large expanses of bare canvas. Some appeared to detach themselves and move freely while others pushed and bulged outward against the frame. Surfaces were subdued and restricted to two or three layers of canvas, painted either a rust, blue-black or deep brown. The opposition of painted canvas to the white background, blemished only by a few ragged edges and paint spots, created a new variation of Marca-Relli's long-standing duality of negative and positive

forces. "What happens in the meeting of these forces . . . [which are] like life . . . is for me practically all of the painting," [8] he says.

More recently, Marca-Relli has brought his work to an even greater economy of means. In the collages of 1967 two or three closed, dense forms are pulled together in an isolated cluster at the center of the canvas. They either intersect or merge completely, leaving the points of contact of the separate collage strips all but indistinct. These collages are infused with a refinement, perfection of finish, and total equilibrium in which all evidence of the working process has been dissolved. Yet at the same time, as he has so often, Marca-Relli has turned again to his constant source of visual fascination, the human figure. That this pattern of rediscovery of the figure, after a drive to a simplified abstraction had tentatively opened a new phase, was apparent in *Figure Form I* (p. 62) of 1966, and one or two collages of 1967. But if these seem isolated examples, Marca-Relli has been working on an extended series of small collage drawings during the past three years which concconcentrate exclusively on the figure. Like the early collages of 1954-55, these figures are generally seated, and face squarely forward. But unlike them, and in dramatic opposition to the abstract reductions in the 1966-67 work, these collages are filled with a new abundance of brushed and active surfaces and textures. As in his collages done in past years, they strive for an elusive and contingent order, reached by that continuing search which is at the heart of the creative act itself.

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[1] Interview with the artist, in Gladys S. Kashdin, *Abstract-Expressionism: An Anolysis of the Movement Based primarily upon Interviews with Seven Participating Artists.* (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Florida State University, 1965), p 20.

[2] Preface to the Catalogue, *Corrado di Morco-Relli,* Niveau Gallery, New York, 1947.

[3] Dorothy Seckler, Unpublished Interview with Conrad Marca-Relli, June 10, 1965, Archives of American Art, Detroit.

[4] In conversation with the author.

[5] Bernard Chaet, "Collage Transformed: An Interview with Conrad Marca-Relli." *Arts.* June, 1959, p 64.

[6] Harriet Janis and Rudi Blesh, *Collage, Personolities, Concepts, Techniques,* (Philadelphia, Chilton Company, 1962), p 197.

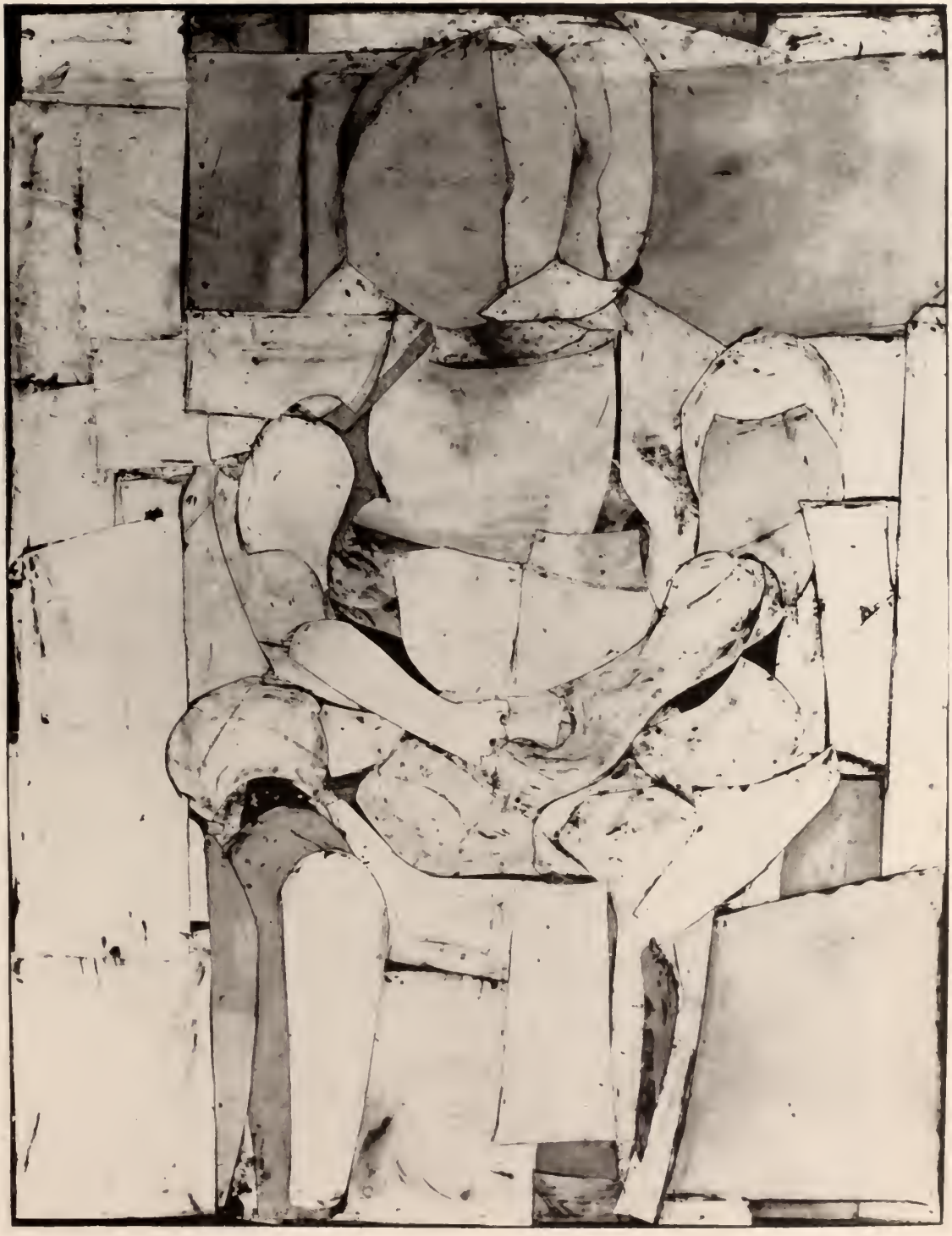
[7] Gladys S. Kashdin, *op. cit.* p 123.

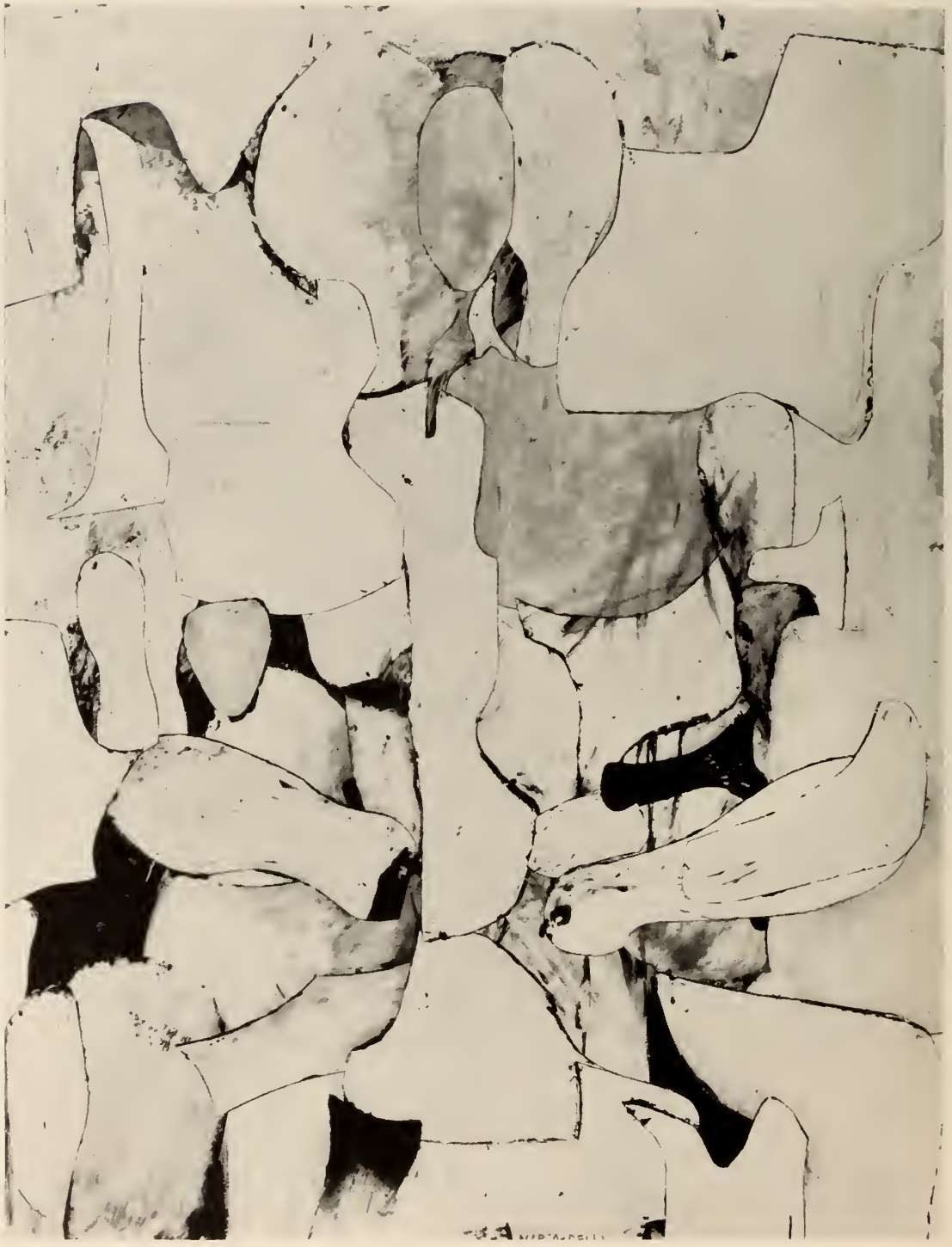
[8] *Ibid.* p 100.

The Vestibule. 1954.
Oil and canvas collage. 49½ x 41½.
Lent by Mr. Richard Brown Baker.

Sleeping Figure. 1953-54.
Oil and canvas collage. $52^{1}/_{8} \times 77^{5}/_{8}$.
Lent by The Museum of Modern Art.
Mr. and Mrs. Walter Bareiss Fund.

opposite:
Seated Figure. 1954.
Oil and canvas collage. 66 x 50.
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Walter Bareiss.





The Struggle. 1955.
Oil and canvas collage. 39 x 73.
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin D. Gilbert.

opposite:
The Tenant. 1955.
Oil and canvas collage. 71¼ x 54.
Lent by Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute.

The Warrior. 1956.
Oil and canvas collage. 85 x 50.
Lent by The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

The Upheaval. 1956.
Oil and canvas collage. 70 x 83.
Lent by Miss Katherine Ordway.

Trial. 1956.
Oil and canvas collage. 81½ x 131.
Lent by The Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

The Battle. 1956.
Oil and canvas collage. $70^{1}/_{2} \times 130^{1}/_{2}$.
Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
Arthur H. Hern Fund, 1956.

The Dweller. 1957.
Oil and canvas collage. 59 1/2 x 49 3/8.
Lent by The Detroit Institute of Arts.

Odalisque. 1957.
Oil and canvas collage. 66 x 83.
Lent by Albright-Knox Art Gallery.

The Surge. 1958.
Oil and canvas collage. 54 x 71.
Lent by the Contemporary Collection of
The Cleveland Museum of Art.

Pamplona. 1958.
Oil and canvas collage. 57 x 77.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

Night Freight. 1958.
Oil and canvas collage. 57 x 77.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

Black Rock. 1958.
Oil and canvas collage. 77 x 114.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

The Joust. 1959.
Oil and canvas collage. 57 x 77.
Lent by Walker Art Center.

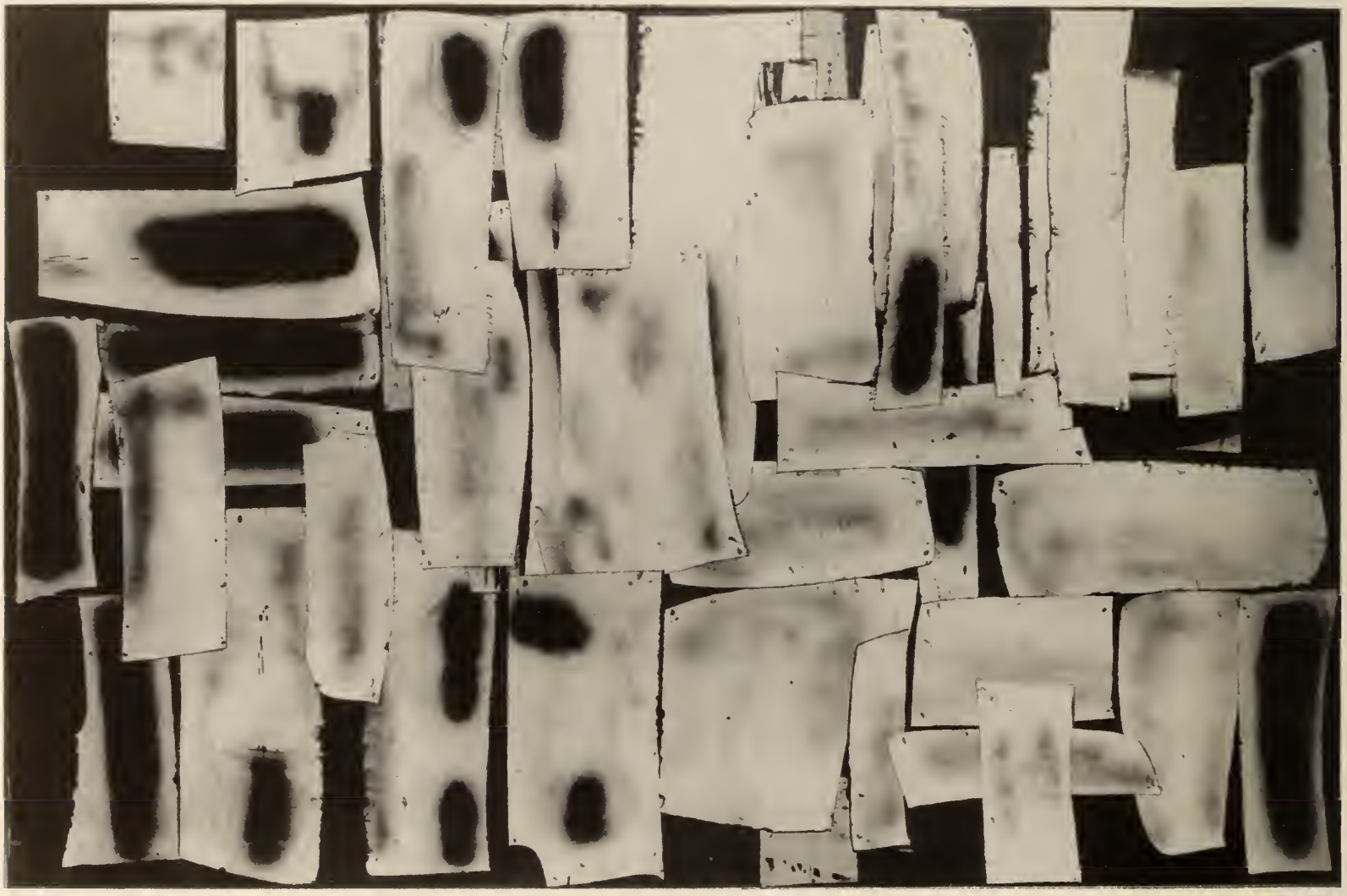
Junction. 1958.
Oil and canvas collage. 56 x 77½.
Collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art. Gift of the Friends of the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Untitled. 1959.
Oil and canvas collage. 32 x 26.
Lent by Messrs. Kennedy-Garber.

October 27, 1959. 1959.
Oil and canvas collage. 72 x 84.
Lent by The Chase Manhattan Bank.

16 November, 1959. 1959.
Oil and canvas collage. 70¼ x 47⅞.
Lent by Wadsworth Atheneum.

The Passage. 1961.
Oil and canvas collage. 84 x 120.
Lent by Bundy Art Gallery.



April 5, 1960. 1960.
Oil and canvas collage. 60 x 90.
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Samuel M. Kootz.

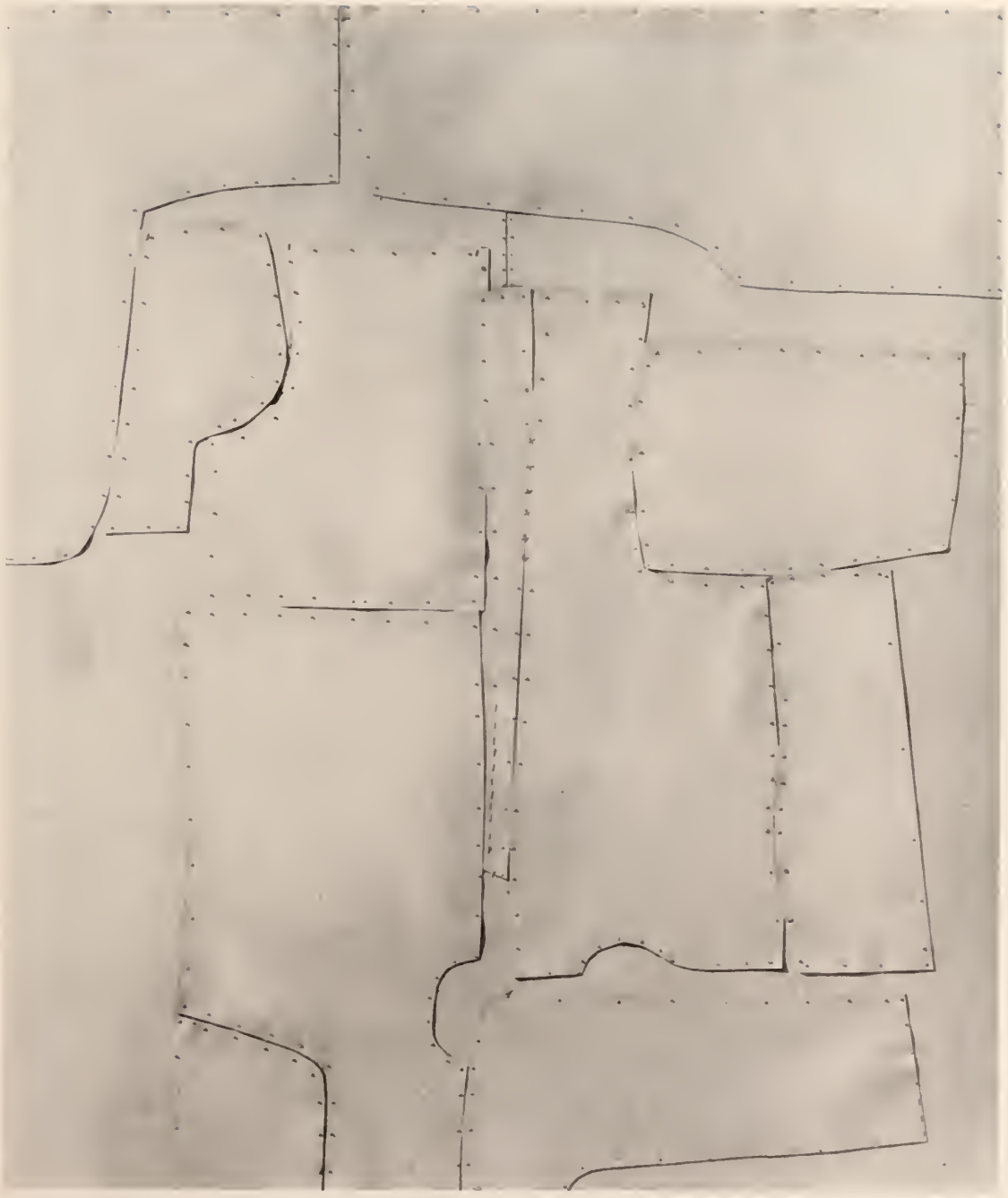
The Sentinel. 1961.
Oil and canvas collage. 78 x 51.
Private Collection, New York.

The Blackboard. 1961.
Oil and canvas collage. 84 x 120.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

Sierra Madre. 1961.
Oil and canvas collage. 72 x 52½.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

Monk Brown. 1961.
Oil and canvas collage. 32 x 48.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

Untitled. 1961.
Metal collage. 24 x 32.
Lent by the artist.



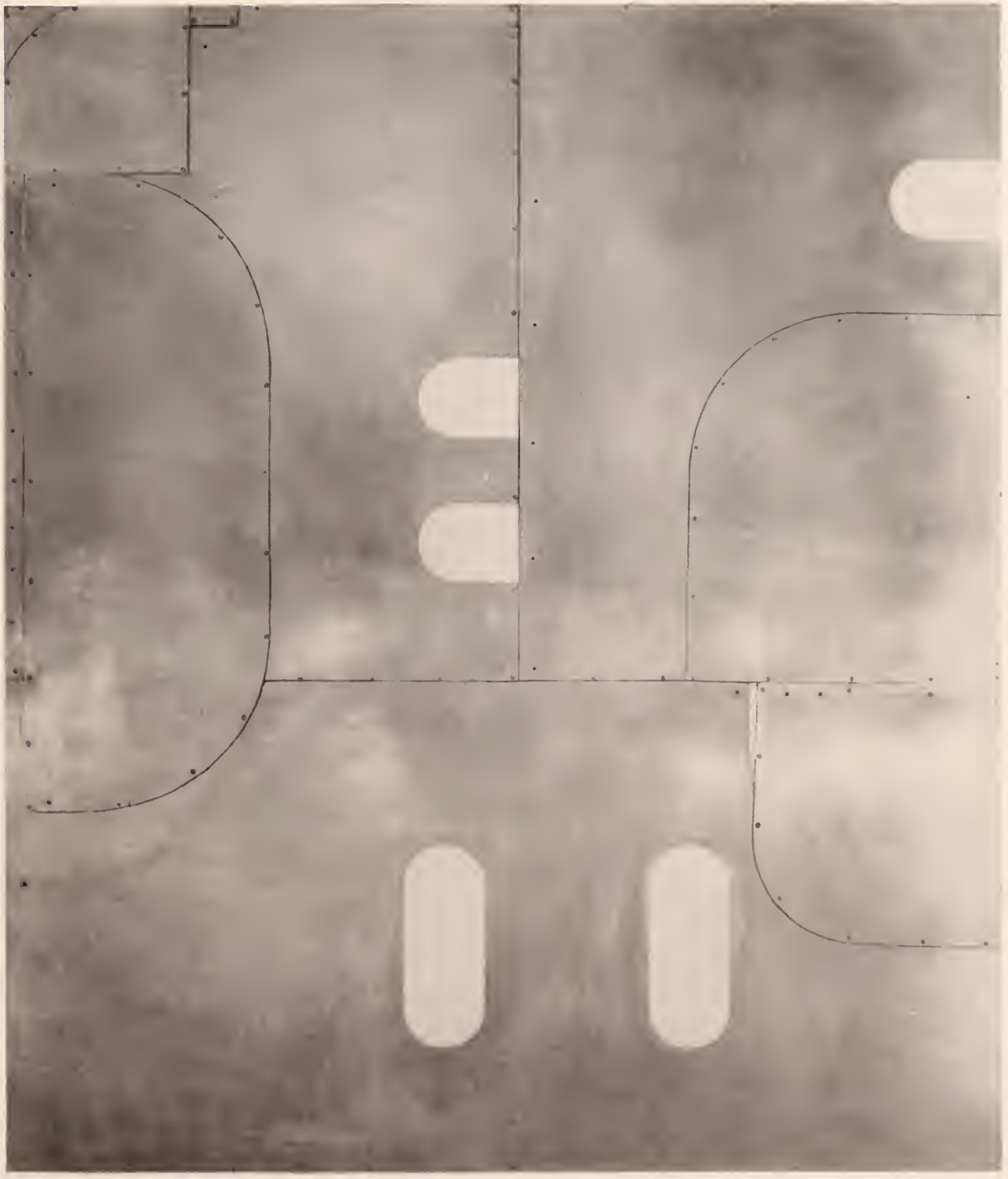
Plan B. 1962.
Painted vinyl collage. 72 x 60.
Lent by Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.
(Exhibited in New York only)

opposite:
Cristobal. 1962.
Painted vinyl collage. 75 x 64.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

XK-120. 1963.
Painted aluminum collage. 64 x 70.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

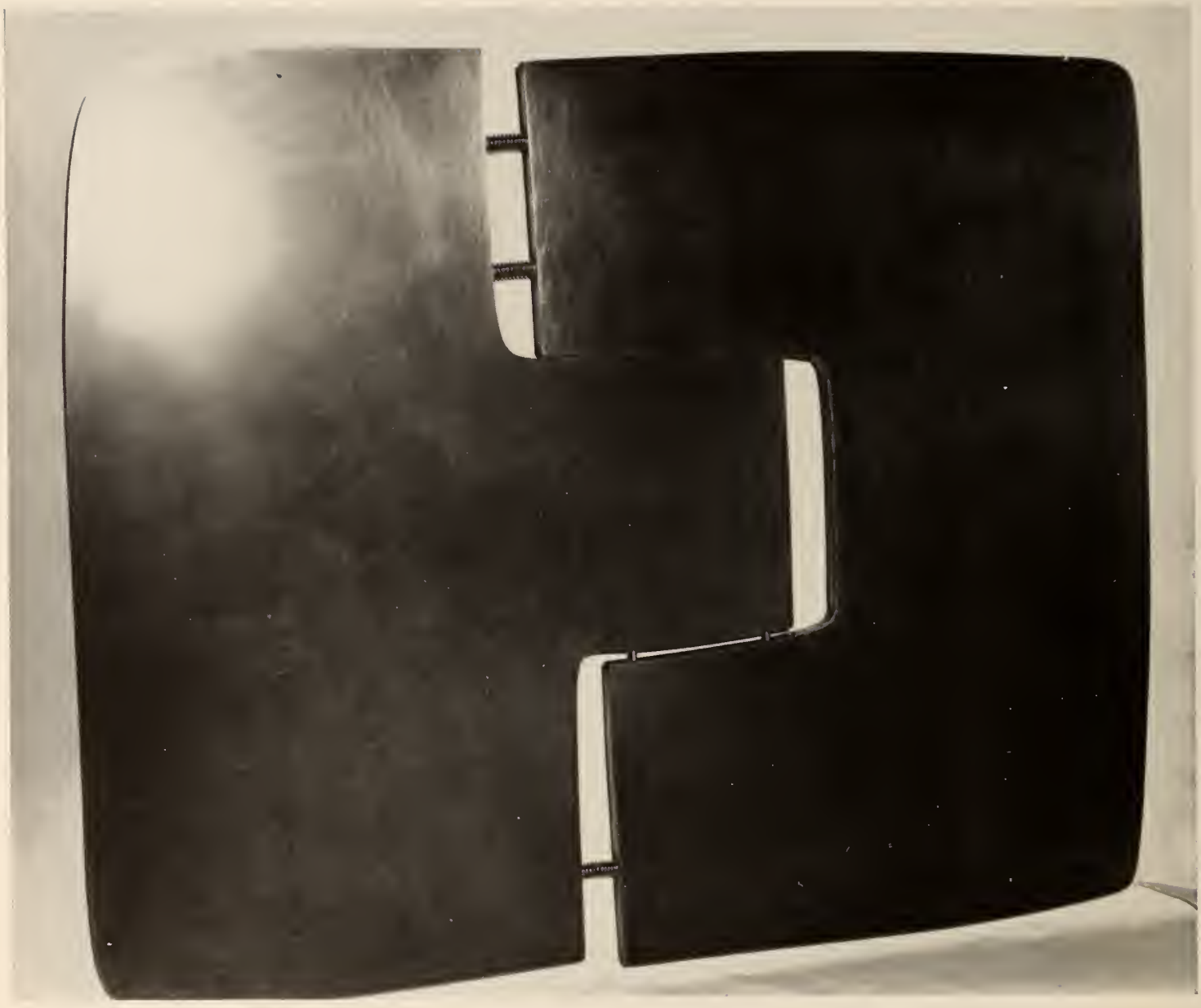
Runway #3. 1963.
Aluminum collage. 63 x 71.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

opposite:
Lockheed 200. 1964.
Aluminum relief. $82^{1}/_{2}$ x $69^{3}/_{4}$.
Lent by Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute.



Untitled. 1964.
Aluminum relief. 44 x 47.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

opposite:
X-L-40. 1963.
Aluminum relief. 72 x 64.
Lent by the artist.



Untitled. 1964.
Aluminum relief. 53 x 65.
Collection of the Whitney Museum of
American Art. Gift of the Friends of the
Whitney Museum of American Art.

Untitled. 1964.
Aluminum relief. 48 x 46.
Lent by the artist.

U-4. 1966.
Aluminum sculpture. 48 x 56 x 6 3/4.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

RXL-4. 1966.
Aluminum sculpture. 57 x 54 x 4.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

Figure-Form I. 1966.
Painted canvas collage. 39 x 45.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

Untitled. 1966.
Painted canvas collage. 59 x 72½.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

Untitled. 1967.
Painted canvas collage. 32 x 36.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

opposite:
Untitled. 1966.
Painted canvas collage. 72 x 60.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

opposite:
Untitled. 1967.
Painted canvas collage. 70 x 57.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

Untitled. 1967.
Painted canvas collage. 57 x 70.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

Figure. 1965.
Oil and canvas collage. 20 x 14¼.
Lent by the artist.

Seated Figure. 1965.
Oil and canvas collage. 24½ x 21.
Lent by the artist.

Seated Figure. 1966.
Oil and canvas collage. 19¼ x 17½.
Lent by the artist.

Figure. 1966.
Oil and canvas collage. 19¼ x 15⅞.
Lent by the artist.

Catalogue of the Exhibition

The arrangement is chronological. Measurements are in inches, height preceding width and depth. Works marked with an asterisk are illustrated.

*1 **Cityscape.** 1952.
Oil on canvas. 26 x 38.
Lent by the artist.

*2 **Still Life.** 1952-53.
Oil and canvas collage. 40 x 50.
Lent by the artist.

*3 **Seated Figure Outdoors.** 1953.
Oil and canvas collage. 20 x 15.
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Walter Bareiss.

*4 **Sleeping Figure.** 1953-54.
Oil and canvas collage. 52 1/8 x 77 5/8.
Lent by The Museum of Modern Art.
Mr. and Mrs. Walter Bareiss Fund.

5 **Torso.** 1954.
Oil and canvas collage. 34 x 24.
Lent by Mr. Jacques Kaplan.

*6 **Seated Figure.** 1954.
Oil and canvas collage. 66 x 50.
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Walter Bareiss.

*7 **The Vestibule.** 1954.
Oil and canvas collage. 49 1/2 x 41 1/2.
Lent by Mr. Richard Brown Baker.

*8 **Oracle.** 1955.
Oil and canvas collage. 79 x 49.
Lent by Mrs. Eleanor Ward.

9 **The Strategist.** 1955.
Oil and canvas collage. 69 1/2 x 48 1/2.
Lent by the artist.

*10 **The Tenant.** 1955.
Oil and canvas collage. 71 1/4 x 54.
Lent by Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute.

*11 **The Struggle.** 1955.
Oil and canvas collage. 39 x 73.
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin D. Gilbert.

12 **The Seeker.** 1955.
Oil and canvas collage. 52 x 43.
Lent by Mrs. Eleanor Ward.

13 **Seated Figure.** 1956.
Canvas collage. 33 x 32.
Lent by Jeanne Reynal.

14 **Ajax.** 1956.
Oil and canvas collage. 36 x 28.
Private collection.

*15 **The Warrior.** 1956.
Oil and canvas collage. 85 x 50.
Lent by The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

*16 **The Upheaval.** 1956.
Oil and canvas collage. 70 x 83.
Lent by Miss Katherine Ordway.

*17 **Trial.** 1956.
Oil and canvas collage. 81 1/2 x 131.
Lent by The Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

*18 **The Battle.** 1956.
Oil and canvas collage. 70 1/2 x 130 1/2.
Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Arthur H. Hearn Fund, 1956.

*19 **The Dweller.** 1957.
Oil and canvas collage. 59 1/2 x 49 3/8.
Lent by The Detroit Institute of Arts.

20 **The Samurai.** 1957.
Oil and canvas collage. 62 x 50.
Lent by the artist.

*21 **Odalisque.** 1957.
Oil and canvas collage. 66 x 83.
Lent by Albright-Knox Art Gallery.

22 **St. Cyprian's Day.** 1957-58.
Oil and canvas collage. 55 x 136.
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. William B. Jaffe.

*23 **The Surge.** 1958.
Oil and canvas collage. 54 x 71.
Lent by the Contemporary Collection of The Cleveland Museum of Art.

*24 **Pamplona.** 1958.
Oil and canvas collage. 57 x 77.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

*25 **Night Freight.** 1958.
Oil and canvas collage. 57 x 77.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

*26 **Black Rock.** 1958.
Oil and canvas collage. 77 x 114.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

*27 **Junction.** 1958.
Oil and canvas collage. 56 x 77 1/2.
Collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art. Gift of the Friends of the Whitney Museum of American Art.

*28 **The Joust.** 1959.
Oil and canvas collage. 57 x 77.
Lent by Walker Art Center.

*29 **Untitled.** 1959.
Oil and canvas collage. 32 x 26.
Lent by Messrs. Kennedy-Garber.

30 **September 1, 1959.** 1959.
Oil and canvas collage. 72 x 72.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

*31 **October 27, 1959.** 1959.
Oil and canvas collage. 72 x 84.
Lent by The Chase Manhattan Bank.

*32 **16 November, 1959.** 1959.
Oil and canvas collage. 70 1/4 x 47 7/8.
Lent by Wadsworth Atheneum.

*33 **April 5, 1960.** 1960.
Oil and canvas collage. 60 x 90.
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Samuel M. Kootz.

*34 **The Passage.** 1961.
Oil and canvas collage. 84 x 120.
Lent by Bundy Art Gallery.

35 **Black and White #2.** 1961.
Oil and canvas collage. 60 x 84.
Lent by The Singer Company.

*36 **The Blackboard.** 1961.
Oil and canvas collage. 84 x 120.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

*37 **The Sentinel.** 1961.
Oil and canvas collage. 78 x 51.
Private Collection, New York.

*38 **Sierra Madre.** 1961.
Oil and canvas collage. 72 x 52½.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

*39 **Monk Brown.** 1961.
Oil and canvas collage. 32 x 48.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

40 **Blueprint.** 1961.
Oil and canvas collage. 53 x 72.
Lent by Alcoa Collection of Contemporary Art. (Exhibited in New York only)

*41 **Untitled.** 1961.
Metal collage. 24 x 32.
Lent by the artist.

42 **Untitled.** 1961.
Metal collage. 24 x 32.
Lent by the artist.

43 **Figure.** 1962.
Painted vinyl collage. 66 x 65.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

*44 **Plan B.** 1962.
Painted vinyl collage. 72 x 60.
Lent by Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. (Exhibited in New York only)

45 **Plan M.** 1962.
Painted vinyl collage. 72 x 60.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

46 **Gate 7.** 1962.
Painted vinyl collage. 72 x 60.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

*47 **Cristobal.** 1962.
Painted vinyl collage. 75 x 64.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

*48 **Runway #3.** 1963.
Painted aluminum collage. 63 x 71.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

*49 **XK-120.** 1963.
Painted aluminum collage. 64 x 70.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

*50 **X-L-40.** 1963.
Painted aluminum collage. 72 x 64.
Lent by the artist.

*51 **Lockheed 200.** 1964.
Painted aluminum collage. 82½ x 69¾.
Lent by Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute.

*52 **Untitled.** 1964.
Aluminum relief. 44 x 47.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

53 **Untitled.** 1964.
Aluminum relief. 46 x 46.
Lent by the artist.

*54 **Untitled.** 1964.
Aluminum relief. 53 x 65.
Collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art. Gift of the Friends of the Whitney Museum of American Art.

*55 **Untitled.** 1964.
Aluminum relief. 48 x 46.
Lent by the artist.

*56 **RXL-4.** 1966.
Aluminum sculpture. 57 x 54 x 4.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

*57 **U-4.** 1966.
Aluminum sculpture. 48 x 56 x 6 3/4.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

58 **TR-7.** 1966.
Aluminum sculpture. 56 x 48 x 6 3/4.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

59 **XK-14.** 1966.
Aluminum sculpture. 42 x 48 x 3 1/2.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

60 **Untitled.** 1966.
Painted canvas collage. 60 x 70.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

*61 **Untitled.** 1966.
Painted canvas collage. 72 x 60.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

*62 **Untitled.** 1966.
Painted canvas collage. 59 x 72 1/2.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

*63 **Figure-Form I.** 1966.
Painted canvas collage. 39 x 45.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

*64 **Untitled.** 1967.
Painted canvas collage. 70 x 57.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

65 **Untitled.** 1967.
Painted canvas collage. 57 x 70.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

*66 **Untitled.** 1967.
Painted canvas collage. 57 x 70.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

*67 **Untitled.** 1967.
Painted canvas collage. 32 x 36.
Lent by the artist, courtesy of Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York.

COLLAGE DRAWINGS

68 **Village.** 1963.
Oil and canvas collage. 13 1/4 x 21.
Lent by the artist.

69 **Figure in Room.** 1954.
Oil and paper collage. 21 1/4 x 14 7/8.
Lent by the artist.

70 **Figure.** 1964.
Canvas drawing collage. 19 x 14.
Lent by the artist.

*71 **Seated Figure.** 1965.
Oil and canvas collage. 24 1/2 x 21.
Lent by the artist.

*72 **Figure.** 1965.
Oil and canvas collage. 20 x 14 1/4.
Lent by the artist.

73 **Standing Figure.** 1965.
Oil and canvas collage. 19 1/4 x 15 5/8.
Lent by the artist.

74 **Figure.** 1965.
Oil and wax collage. 20 1/4 x 16.
Lent by the artist.

75 **Untitled.** 1965.
Canvas collage. 13 7/8 x 12 3/4.
Lent by the artist.

76 **Untitled.** 1965.
Canvas collage. 17 x 14.
Lent by the artist.

77 **Untitled.** 1965.
Canvas collage. 13 x 11.
Lent by the artist.

78 **Reclining Figure.** 1966.
Oil and canvas collage. 13 x 21 3/4.
Lent by the artist.

*79 **Seated Figure.** 1966.
Oil and canvas collage. 19 1/4 x 17 1/2.
Lent by the artist.

80 **Figure Seated.** 1966.
Oil on canvas. 16 7/8 x 13.
Lent by the artist.

81 **Seated Figure.** 1966.
Oil and canvas collage. 27 1/4 x 21 1/4.
Lent by the artist.

*82 **Figure.** 1966.
Oil and canvas collage. 19 1/4 x 15 7/8.
Lent by the artist.

83 **Figure.** 1966.
Oil and canvas collage. 23 3/4 x 16 7/8.
Lent by the artist.

Chronology

1913 Born in Boston, June 5. Childhood spent in Europe and Boston.

1926 Family moved permanently to New York.

1930 Devoted himself to painting, joined small art classes, spent one year at Cooper Union.

1931 Established own studio.

1931-1934 Did occasional illustrations and covers for newspapers and periodicals.

1935-1938 Joined WPA, Federal Art Project, Easel and Mural Divisions.

1940 Traveled to Mexico.

1941 First exhibited at Contemporary Arts, Soldier-Artists Exhibition.

1941-1945 Served in U.S. Army.

1945 Moved to Woodstock, New York.

1946 Moved studio to New York.

1947 First one-man show at Niveau Gallery, New York.

1948-1949 Lived in Rome and Paris.

1949 Returned to New York, joined Artists Club, helped to organize first Artists Annual show on Ninth Street.

1951 Went to Rome, returning to New York in early 1952.

1953 Joined Stable Gallery. Visited Mexico briefly in summer, then moved to East Hampton. Since then has lived there and in Europe.

1954 Received Logan medal for *Seated Figure,* 1954, Art Institute of Chicago.

1954-1955 Visiting critic Yale University, New Haven.

1957 Lived in Rome, had one-man shows in Rome and Milan.

1958 Joined Kootz Gallery.

1958 Taught for five months at University of California at Berkeley. Visited Rome.

1959 Received grant from Ford Foundation.

1959-1960 Visiting critic Yale University, New Haven.

1960-1967 Annual trips to Europe.

1965-1967 Artist in residence, New College, Sarasota, Florida.

1966 Joined Marlborough-Gerson Gallery.

One-Man Exhibitions

1947 Niveau Gallery, New York
1949 Galleria Il Cortile, Rome
Niveau Gallery, New York
1951 New Gallery, New York
1953 Stable Gallery, New York
1955 Stable Gallery, New York
1956 Stable Gallery, New York
Frank Perls Gallery, Hollywood
1957 Galleria La Tartaruga, Rome
Galleria del Naviglio, Milan
1958 Stable Gallery, New York
1959 Kootz Gallery, New York
1960 Kootz Gallery, New York
Playhouse Gallery, Sharon, Connecticut
1961 Kootz Gallery, New York
Bolles Gallery, San Francisco
Joan Peterson Gallery, Boston
Instituto d'Arte Contemporaneo, Lima, Peru
Galerie Schmela, Düsseldorf (with Robert Motherwell)
1962 Kootz Gallery, New York
Galerie de France, Paris
1963 Galerie Charles Lienhard, Zurich
Kootz Gallery, New York
Tokyo Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
1964 Kootz Gallery, New York
1965 Galleria Bonino, Buenos Aires
1967 James David Gallery, Coral Gables, Florida
Makler Gallery, Philadelphia

Important Group Exhibitions

1941 Soldier-Artists, Contemporary Arts, New York

1950 Abstraction Today, New Gallery, New York

1955 XXVIII Biennale Internazionale D'Arte, Venice (United States Pavilion)

Contemporary American Painting and Sculpture, University of Illinois, Urbana

1958 American Art, Brussels Universal and International Exhibition

1959 American National Exhibition, Moscow

V Bienal Estados Unidos, Museu de Arte Moderna, Sao Paulo

Documenta II, Kassel

1960 Segunda Bienal interamericana de Mexico, Mexico City

Paths of Abstract Art, Cleveland Museum of Art

60 American Painters 1960, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis

Contemporary American Painting, Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts, Columbus, Ohio

1961 The Art of Assemblage, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

1962 Art Since 1950, World's Fair, Seattle

1964 Between the Fairs, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

1965 The Twenty-ninth Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary American Art, The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

1966 Art of the United States, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

1967 Guston, Marca-Relli, Rosati, Colby College, Waterville, Maine

ANNUALS

Art Institute of Chicago Annual: 1954, 1961, 1963

The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts Annual: 1958, 1960, 1962, 1965

Pittsburgh International Exhibition, Carnegie Institute: 1955, 1958, 1961, 1964

Whitney Museum of American Art Annual Exhibition: 1953, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1959, 1961, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966

Selected Bibliography

References are arranged alphabetically by author or title, with exhibition catalogues listed under the name of the city in which the museum or gallery is located. The place of publication of books is New York unless otherwise noted. Materials considered of secondary value, but accessible through standard reference works are not included.

ABBREVIATIONS

Ag August, Ap April, D December, F February, il illustration(s), Ja January, Je June, Jl July, Mr March, My May, N November, O October, p page(s)

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Tokyo: Tokyo Gallery. *Marca-Relli.* 1963. Introduction by Shinichi Segui. Text in Japanese.

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Urbana: University of Illinois. *Contemporary American Painting and Sculpture.* 1955. p 220. Statement by the artist.

Zurich: Galerie Charles Lienhard. *Conrad Marca-Relli.* 1963. 4 pp il. Introduction by Paul Nizon. Text in German.

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P. B.: "Corrado di Marca-Relli". (In "57th Street"). *Art Digest* 27:19 Mr 1953.

L. C.: "Marca-Relli's". (In "Reviews and previews"). *Art News* 63:12 N 1964 il.

S. L. C.: "Marca-Relli". (In "Reviews and previews"). *Art News* 49:46 Ja 1951 il.

Chaet, Bernard: "Collage Transformed: Interview with Corrado Marca-Relli". (In "Studio Talk"). *Arts* 33:64-5 Je 1959 il.

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N. E.: "Conrad Marca-Relli". (In "Reviews and previews"). *Art News* 62:12 Ja 1964 il.

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R. F.: "Soldier-Artists". (In "The Passing Shows"). *Art News* 40:22 O 1941 il.

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